

**Oral History Interview with
Albert Aschenbrenner**

Cal Poly Pomona University Library

Albert Aschenbrenner Summary

Dr. Albert Aschenbrenner was born in 1913 and died in 2002, he had served during World War II in the U.S. Army in Europe and was Captain. He had earned two bronze stars, and later joined Cal Poly's faculty as an English professor in 1947. He was in various posts such as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Cal Poly Pomona and the first chairman of the faculty council. In this interview Dr. Aschenbrenner, he answers questions from Kenneth Kitch while walking around campus. Aschenbrenner talks about several incidents.

Subject Headings

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona—History
Voorhis Campus

Legal Statement

All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between Cal Poly Pomona and the interviewee. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All library rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to the Cal Poly Pomona Library.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to the Cal Poly Pomona Library and should include identification of the specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of passages, and identification of the user.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Manager of College Store	2
Exciting Memories	3-4
Landscape Architecture	5-6
Remembering Various People	7-8
Agricultural Inspection	9
Teachers and Vandalism	10
Chapel	11-13
Poly Vue	14
Arboretum	15
Memories of Students and Problems	16-18

Albert Aschenbrenner

April 27, 1972

*Interview Conducted by Kenneth Kitch
Transcribed by: Andy Kung*

Beginning of Tape 1 Part 1

KK: With me is Dean Aschenbrenner of our School of Arts at Kellogg. Dean Aschenbrenner was one of the faculty at the time this campus at Voorhis was Cal Poly Southern Campus before we gone over to Kellogg and it's quite probable that Dean Aschenbrenner during his stay at Voorhis occupied more assignments at one time or another than any other person on that original crew. I've asked the Dean to give us some of his memories and thoughts as we walk about the campus and here is the Dean. Would you take over sir and tell us if you will when you came here, and under what circumstances and what your first assignment was?

AA: I came to the college in 1947, I was hired by Harold Wilson who was then Dean of this Southern Campus of the College to teach English and History courses.

KK: What kind of English and what kind History did they teach at that time?

AA: Well it was the English requirements for the students who were spending two years and then going to San Luis Obispo to finish their Bachelor's degrees. Freshman Composition, Speech, and the History requirements for meeting general ed state and local requirements.

KK: How did you happen to hear about Cal Poly? As I recall it was tucked away in the orange groves here and very very few people knew about it down here.

AA: I was in a class at USC [University of Southern California] in Sociology and in that class a fellow student Hubert [inaudible], he was in San Luis Obispo campus getting his bachelor's at that time. Harold Wilson and George [inaudible] came to the USC Placement Office looking for someone to teach English. Miss [inaudible] who was at that time in the Placement Office at USC knew Harold Wilson and knew Hubert [inaudible], after my interview with George [inaudible] and Mr. Wilson, I became quite closely acquainted with Hubert [inaudible], that's how I learned about Cal Poly.

KK: And Hubert was then Dean of Liberal Arts as they called it at San Luis Obispo?

AA: Yes, right.

KK: I think he was the Dean of that department when I was first hired to Cal Poly. What was the year you came?

AA: 1947.

KK: Well you were a couple years ahead of me on that. Now, how many boys did they have at the time, and they were all boys of course.

AA: Yes, we had 325 students enrolled at this campus in 1947. I think that was a jump of about 100% in their enrollment in 1946. I understand they had about 120.

KK: And you came then the second year after they had opened up after the war.

AA: Yes, right.

KK: What are the things that—let me ask you this as a sort of on the spot question. What is the incident that you remember most clearly related to your stay here at Voorhis?

AA: I think the first incident I remember, there were many. The first one I remember is meeting of the student body out here in front of the chapel, I think Bob Adams was Student Body President and they were generating funds for a program. They were planning on putting on a barbeque right on campus. Another incident I remember well of course was April 28, 1948, first year here, Harold Wilson, Dean of the Campus walked into my office and said you are now going to be manager of the college store in addition to other duties, then college store was known as the El Patio store. Never forget that day.

KK: [laughs] What happened?

AA: I went to work.

KK: Were you manager in actual fact, behind the counter, or just sort of overseer and supervisor and planner and?

AA: I think the latter. We had a student who was manager of the store, the administrative supervision of the [inaudible] had been delegated to Jim Miller who, was then Business Manager at this Campus. His work got too heavy, too encompassing for him so they shifted the responsibility for overseeing the college store to someone else.

KK: The name Bob Adams rings a bell; does it happen to be the same Bob Adams that later was in charge of the motor crew and [inaudible] up in San Luis Obispo.

AA: I don't know, I don't know. He was red headed.

KK: Yeah, he was red headed.

AA: Young man, who went to teaching Vocational Agriculture down in Orange County for some years.

KK: I'll have to dig into that.

AA: Bob Winterbourne and Henry House know him well.

KK: Alright fine. Did they have Vet Hill here when you came?

AA: No, but they were moving Vet Hill in at the time. It was occupied I think in '48.

KK: And how about the temporary buildings at West Point?

AA: They were here.

KK: And how about the trailers over on what we call now The Island?

AA: The trailer court was here.

KK: And they had already started to extemporize then, hadn't they? I think that's been the history of Cal Poly.

AA: Yes, yes, yes.

KK: I was talking to Cecil Jones the other day and he said that it was the extemporizing ability of the faculty and students that kept this thing going that it had always been on a starvation budget and that it was purely the spirit and desire and the initiative of the people who were over here that kept the thing really rolling.

AA: I would tend to agree with that, people like Henry House when he was Registrar [inaudible]. We spoke about West Point, we had those [inaudible] tents, army tents down there and—

KK: They were army tents with wooden bases, wooden sides.

AA: It was amazing to me how we were able to at that time, note the proximity to the end of World War Two, get our [inaudible] 460 to accept living in that kind of situation. I recall 31 at one time, we didn't have four people in each tent, we had six, and seven, and eight. [Inaudible] Henry House is really the guy who was able to operate right on in the fields, keep everything loading.

KK: What was the most exciting instance you ever faced over here?

AA: Well I'll have to think about that a little while. I think probably the time that we had a Poly Vue barbeque that flows out on us, and Jerry Dimitman, and Henry House, and [inaudible], and those people stepping in and pulling out the barbeque units, throwing that frozen meat on the coals and really coming out with the [inaudible].

KK: Did you know I was talking to Katie, the cook, the other day and getting some of her recollections on tape. And I asked her the most exciting thing that ever happened while she was over here, and she gave exactly that same incident. So, evidently it made quite an impression.

AA: [Inaudible] I was faculty member responsible for advising [inaudible] at that time, and you recall Helen Beckett.

KK: Yes, I do, I have an appointment set up with her.

AA: The first steak that was cut off of that meat when we pulled it out was just plain red raw. I had really don't know what happened but the [inaudible] Henry House can give you that information. But Helen Beckett said that's the best steak she ever had; she liked her steaks rare.

KK: Was she just making do, or did she really mean it?

AA: Oh no way, she liked that. She didn't wait for anybody.

KK: Well, here we stand on the green lawn under the sycamore trees in front of the Administration Building and it's a beautiful clear day, even the smog has not come down yet to a point where it hides the mountains. The chapel is over there with its lush foliage of the Spanish oaks, and the twinkling leaves of the cactus are there, and we see the dome. You remember the story, Ash, about Uncle Charlie [Charles Voorhis] making them quit sandblasting the walls over there and Ted trying to polish that [inaudible].

AA: No, I don't remember that, but I do remember one time we were up there washing that [inaudible] Quite a job.

KK: Well the story goes, and we might just as well get it on record here because I try out some of these things to see who remembers in the [inaudible] they were actually true or just a part of their story. But the story goes that they were sandblasting the chapel walls over there and that they were cleaning the brass dome, the copper dome up there to make it shine and Uncle Charlie heard about it and came over here in post haste and made them stop and he had pointed out that they had copper domes partly so the patina would run down on the walls there and give the appearance of antiquity and you can see on the chapel wall there where they stop the sandblasting and left the copper residue that had come down.

AA: Very effective.

KK: It is, and I guess the old gentleman really knew his stuff on that. Have you ever rode out to the [inaudible]?

AA: Yes.

KK: Did you ever go by and see the chapel that Uncle Charlie built out there?

AA: Yes.

KK: You have. How does it compare with this? I never have, I have seen pictures of it, but I have never been there.

AA: Very similar.

KK: Very similar in architecture, Spanish architecture, pictured windows and so on. Uncle Charlie was a western Kansas boy and like all western Kansas boys, I'm one of them, learned to love mountains and I think he felt that they were really one of the noblest types of creations. Where would you like to walk now?

AA: Why don't you lead the way.

KK: Why don't we just walk down towards the Island and in a few, put some [inaudible] on record for us here as we go along the thoughts you might have.

AA: [Inaudible], I remember Jolly [Oliver] Batcheller and the Ornamental Horticulture classes replanting this planter here with [inaudible]. I think they renovated this lawn here as part of the laboratory. [interruption]

KK: Why don't we go in the patio here? You were talking about Ornamental Horticulture.

AA: They renovated the lawn here as a part of the laboratory exercises in Ornamental Horticulture classes. They did all the tree surgeries that were done here in the early days. This patio here in 1948 was just a little grass layout and Jim Griffin's, I'm not sure if Jim Griffin's, the classes in OH and Agriculture Engineering were used as laboratory exercises to put this patio in, [inaudible] paradise of plants. I'm sure are the original ones that were put in way back at that time.

KK: Do you recall who put them in?

AA: I think, Mr. Batcheller's classes.

KK: I've noticed a little plaque over there on the little pool on the patio, says that it was a class project. It gives the name as I recall it. [Inaudible] Your memory is right on the button.

AA: 1947, '48 [inaudible]. Names of all the students that were there.

KK: Now this modernistic fountain that you see here in the pool of course was designed and built by a couple of architect—landscape architecture boys. While this was being operated as an educational center and they did it as their senior project.

AA: Very nice.

KK: They built the fountain here, as I said, as a senior project and they wanted some ideas to what we would like in whatever design. I told them I felt that if they could combine something, if they could produce something, that could combine the old and the new, that would be very appropriate. And so, in the medium of welded sculpture, they made two or three attempts and finally came up with this. And their thought was that the curves of the iron there caught the curve of the Spanish tile there on the roof and the wrought iron itself tied in, itself, with the Spanish wrought iron that is so prevalent around here.

AA: Some of [inaudible] iron here looks like the teeth on some old spring tooth [inaudible].

KK: It could be. You are basically a farm boy aren't you.

AA: Well.

KK: Actually, I think what they made these from are from brake bands and—

AA: Could be.

KK: Could be, yeah.

AA: You're the mechanic.

KK: Well, we just passed the door of your student store over there. Somebody told me you had a soda fountain.

AA: We had a soda fountain in there.

KK: And what did you produce?

AA: Well, anything except drinks that had alcohol in it.

KK: Is that right [laughs]? I suppose you did some experimenting and some magic formulating and so on and so forth.

AA: What I was experimenting [with] was that we went down to war surplus and paid twenty dollars for an old soda fountain and it cost us two hundred dollars to renovate the dang thing. But when we got it in shape, we were making some malt shakes in there.

KK: You know that goes back to another story people keep bringing up and they call it Henry House of Steamed Laundry. Do you remember that one?

AA: Yes.

KK: [laughs] Henry couldn't turn down the bargain and when he got out here, he found they didn't have steam operators. It was still there in the basement when I came.

AA: Where is it now?

KK: Oh, we finally got somebody who can send it to haul it away for the material.

AA: You didn't have to pay them to haul it away?

KK: No, we had a [inaudible]. What's the saddest thing that ever happened over here that you recall?

AA: I think the, lost two of our students, winter, Christmas vacation. I believe it was 1949. [Inaudible] football player, and [inaudible], a student who was our athletic manager at the time, [inaudible] and [inaudible] came to Cal Poly from the Downey area, [inaudible] was an excellent football player, [inaudible], big, 170-pound back, running back, they were, he was being recruited by people at the Saint Mary's College. Now, Christmas vacation they drove up there to look the place over; car wreck on the way back, both of them were killed. I think the [inaudible].

KK: Well, let's walk on up the avenue here. Let's go up the Island. Meanwhile if see someplace you would like to stop and [pause].

AA: And I was in that office there, right here where the phone booth used to be, and that's the office I was sitting in. Mr. Wilson came in 28 April 1948 said "Aschenbrenner, you're going to manage the store."

KK: [laughs] Now that really made an impression.

AA: He came to that office at another time and said to Mr. [inaudible], Chairman for English and courses in that area and asked the question "Can anyone teach Mathematics?" Mr. [inaudible] and I, if you remember him, we both kind of sank into the corners and [inaudible] not to be there. No one was about to [inaudible] him. Mr. Wilson [inaudible] about thirty seconds of silence, turned around and walked out. As he went out he said to himself "I guess I have to find a Math teacher somewhere else."

KK: [Laughs]

AA: Can you imagine my teaching mathematics?

KK: I can imagine you teaching almost anything. Was this a video room then?

AA: No, no.

KK: You want to enter here?

AA: No, I don't think we need to go in. We had [inaudible] several offices, we had the college store office on the other end of this room, and I was headquartered in there part time, [inaudible].

KK: As I recall, the post office was down in the basement there.

AA: Yes.

KK: Under the apartment, that [inaudible] then. She was telling me that how she used to get up and took meals [inaudible] after they got in from a road trip late at night.

AA: Beautiful lawns here.

KK: Yes. That used to be a big old tree when you were here. And it had some live limbs, that's just until a few years ago, but they came out at the end of dead limbs. And they started dropping on the tiles and breaking the tiles, so they had to cut them off. And they twined that [inaudible] over there. [Inaudible], Was the Voorhis, any of them living on campus while you were here?

AA: No. Paul, Uncle Charlie, Smith, we were all [inaudible] students, most of them [inaudible] students, World War II vets. This is [inaudible] avocado grove here I think he—

KK: Was this his first avocado grove here?

AA: I don't know. I think he started this one. Mr. Batcheller put a lot of time in this campus with the ornamentals had Ted [inaudible] with the citrus.

KK: I'm looking forward to the time when I get Jolly [Batcheller] here. He promised to come. Do you have any questions that I ought to be sure in asking?

AA: Oh, ask him about the Batcheller mump out here.

KK: You mean at the entrance?

AA: Yes.

KK: Ok.

AA: You see that nice tree there?

KK: Yes, it is, we have a tremendous variety of Eucalyptus. You can spot, five or six varieties right here within. This is one, and that's very popular for flower arranging.

AA: Uh huh.

KK: Let's turn up here.

AA: [Inaudible], you know about the, what they call the field house over there, little shack, [inaudible].

KK: Yes, yeah, we finally took care of that.

AA: Is Mrs. Batcheller in the area?

KK: The last I heard she was in Ventura, living there.

AA: If you get a hold of her, talk about some of the memories on Vet Hill.

KK: That's a good suggestion.

AA: You don't remember Bob Bogner?

KK: No, no I don't.

AA: Did I mention his name at one time?

KK: No, I don't think you did.

AA: He was here, was probably [inaudible] degree in Agriculture at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Went to work for a year with some outfit and then came down here as Property Clerk. Was here two years I think and went up to Cloverdale. Had been in farming grapes, deciduous fruits up there since then.

KK: How do you spell his name?

AA: B, O, G, N, E, R.

KK: Bogner.

AA: Bogner, he lived in this unit, that he will, he would probably know a lot of the background.

KK: Was he one of the first ones that lived there?

AA: Well, no, I don't think so, but he was relatively early day [inaudible].

KK: Just for historic purposes, I'm trying to find the name of the first family that were moved in there and I haven't been able to do it thus far for sure. Maybe several of them came in at the same time and there was no first one maybe.

AA: Well, let's see, Harold Wilson is probably the one who could give you that, Henry House, [inaudible], Bob Winterbourne might.

KK: When did Bob come? Do you remember?

AA: Well he was here in 1946, '47, '48 as a student. Went to San Luis Obispo.

KK: And he really was here then from the start?

AA: He was here from the start I think yeah. Teaching agriculture up in the Ventura area and came down in 1953 [inaudible].

KK: Where does Howard Hawkins fit in here?

AA: Howard Hawkins was on the faculty before World War II in 1938, '39 and 1940, I think. I didn't know him until later when I was here. I understand he's Mayor in Covina again.

KK: Yes, he is.

AA: His third round?

KK: I think so, and he opposed the construction of that Civic Center there. That was his big plank.

AA: I guess we won't have the Civic Center for a while.

KK: I guess they won't have the Civic Center for a while. Somebody told me that they had \$300,000 worth of [inaudible] plans, would have to be laid on the job. But he and another business manager [inaudible]. I think there's no question that what it was [inaudible] by a substantial margin. [Inaudible], votes for these people, tell the story. When did they put in the tennis courts? Were they here from the first?

AA: Some of them were here, I think those were the Vet [inaudible]. Who used to get about a use [inaudible]. Used to be very much of a family atmosphere here.

KK: I sense that with the [inaudible].

AA: [Inaudible] up in Vet Hill. The pool was an excellent source of pleasure for the families.

KK: And I understand they used to have a cinder track or around the recreation field out there.

AA: Yes, yes.

KK: Cinder track, that was fun [inaudible].

AA: Give you the background, couple of people [inaudible] coached football here for one year, came up around, that was our first football season, I think 1947, '48. [Inaudible]. Was here one year and returned to Excelsior High School in an administrative capacity. Joined his staff [inaudible], he left us in two or three years and went down to Orange Coast College, in charge of their vocation education. Area had Orange Coast.

KK: Well we produced a lot of [inaudible] people didn't we. [Inaudible] people and agricultural inspectors I think, those early days were.

AA: We have a tremendous percentage of Ag [agriculture] commissioners in the state are alumni of this program.

KK: The present-day Ag commissioners.

AA: Yes.

KK: Gotcha. I can recall coming back to California by car in several occasions and all those [inaudible] I'd run on to a Cal Poly boy in inspection station there. Found one up in Lake Tahoe once. The school, even when it was tiny down here, made its impact.

AA: Well this was the only Ag [agricultural] inspection major, now we call it Ag Biology. In the state, understand personal habits [inaudible] in this area.

KK: [Inaudible]

AA: [Inaudible] and at that time, we did the teaching of the Biology, the [inaudible] classes. Then we hired Harold [inaudible], and Howard Brown, and Jerry Dimitman, I think they all came in 1947 or the latest '48.

KK: You are talking about people—that most of them are still here.

AA: Those three are. [inaudible] winter home up in Northern California and spends his summers in the Palm Desert area [inaudible].

KK: He was a dear man. Did you live on campus?

AA: No, I never had that pleasure.

KK: How many teachers lived on campus when you were here? Or staff?

AA: Jolly Batcheller lived here, [inaudible], Jim Degen lived here, [inaudible] lived in the two-story [inaudible].

KK: And they would occupy apartments and students would occupy rest of the house.

AA: Right.

KK: Did you ever have any particular trouble with vandalism in that day and age?

AA: No, I don't think we really did. I wasn't aware of it. If we did, I'm sure we considered it serious, serious behavior but [inaudible] behavior very mild.

End of Albert Aschenbrenner Interview Part 1 of 2

Start of Albert Aschenbrenner Interview Part 2 of 2

KK: [Inaudible] at the time.

AA: We had a greater percentage of veterans in our student body, they had spent two to five years in service in one branch or another—World War II. Many returned to college as a result of veteran benefits [inaudible] and the [inaudible] program. We thought at the time that they were a very [inaudible] on the average than we [inaudible] at the time. I don't think they're any older on the average than they are now, a phenomenon [inaudible] our society has come through.

KK: Did you go out and get these students with recruiting teams or anything like that or did most of them just [inaudible] on their own?

AA: Well I think part of both, part of both. We had a lot of student recruitment activity going on [inaudible] High School Ag departments in Southern California. We would go out since we were a part of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Here, we'd go out and we'd present the programs that they offered at San Luis and they would go out and for those programs that we had that which they did not have. They would speak for us like Ag inspection, as in [inaudible].

KK: Was there any athletic recruiting?

AA: I don't really think so.

KK: I would gather not.

AA: The fellas who played football here were here [inaudible] agriculture, knowing that they would spend two years here and transfer to San Luis Obispo. Speaking now, '48, '49, '50, '51, about 1951, we began to feel here that we ought to have a four-year program. So, our course offerings have expanded far enough that they would take three years of work. And in 1953 and '4, it was down to 33-unit requirements at San Luis Obispo and as you know our first graduation at this campus was in 1956.

KK: Yes, I remember that. And that actually was the year you really moved over to Kellogg.

AA: Yes, [inaudible] at Kellogg, not here.

KK: What memories do you have of the chapel? That was a sentimental target for people whom I talk to.

AA: Speech was held in that building. George [inaudible] and I had Speech classes and they were all scheduled for the Chapel because of the seating arrangements there. I know that we had some classes in History scheduled in there. We used that as our biggest lecture facility. We produced some ministers there.

KK: [laughs] so I understand. What do you say we walk back towards the Chapel and then is there any other particular place you'd like to visit while you're over here?

AA: I want to make sure to take a look at Henry House's Amphitheater down the hill here.

KK: Alright fine, its largely—

AA: When you talk with him, be sure to ask him about that [inaudible] big [inaudible].

KK: Alright now that's an incident. Right now, it's covered with ivy. We haven't kept it clear. Henry just pops up everywhere and, here doesn't he?

AA: All over the college.

KK: And he still fights furiously for his students.

AA: Henry is very much committed to the total education of the students.

KK: By the way, [inaudible] right here I think it's one of the best possible views of this new golf course and club. I've noticed it through here.

AA: How's the construction of the [inaudible].

KK: No, no, they have a lot of land yet to fill, and it started on this latest leg that they had so much trouble with sanding the state council on reducing the size of the houses.

AA: Square footage?

KK: Yeah, square footage. So, they have a long way to go [inaudible].

AA: [inaudible].

KK: [inaudible] front of the administration only? Well we'll certainly check it in some of those old photos.

AA: As I recall, coming around the campus a certain time, I could see that white building with the red tile, just standing out there [inaudible], pretty well hidden by the trees.

KK: Yes, I have a hunch that they were considerably smaller but that's an interesting angle [inaudible].

AA: And this [inaudible] around the [inaudible], where the oak tree was where you mentioned earlier was not [inaudible].

KK: The—

AA: [inaudible] nice and lean grass.

KK: All out here? Where we have asphalt now?

AA: Right.

KK: The [inaudible] people tell us that the weld they put around the oak tree was what killed them. That they didn't.

AA: No, here they didn't do nothing. The space should [inaudible]. I don't know. It does look pretty high. [inaudible] landscaping on this building.

KK: This was similar landscaping.

AA: The palms were higher.

KK: These are very early blooming [inaudible]. [Inaudible] says over here completely out of cycle, they bloom many times during the year. [Inaudible] I thought they were Christmas things.

AA: I did too.

KK: These will just bloom at any time.

AA: I got one at home, I just trim back. It was blooming even last weekend.

KK: We can get in. We go around the side to get in.

AA: I was supposed to have classes in Public Speaking. This is not too bad. I remember Mr. [inaudible] had his students standing up there near the communion rail, all the rail, and he had his class on either side.

KK: We're now standing at the back of the Chapel and Dean Aschenbrenner was recalling when he held his classes in here. Something interesting when you were here, they had those plates under the lamps there, glass, and that glass kept cracking, and some people said it was because of the vibration [inaudible] organ. So, we put fiber glass in there and we can scarcely tell the difference and it [inaudible].

AA: [inaudible] and it'll take [Lowell "Keith" Weeks' [inaudible], music classes in here, band practice [inaudible]. Imagine what that picture window would [inaudible].

KK: We have many a couple of those days a year now is that right? Something like that, very few.

AA: Relatively few, beautiful setting. As I recall this is very similar to the Voorhis chapel up in Fremont as well.

KK: Well that's one thing I wanted to ask you. The architect here, you may have heard is the same one we did for [inaudible] City Hall. Quite an authority [inaudible]. So, I saw, [inaudible] that he made the handle, the handle work on the doors operating left hand as the old Spaniards did so they'd have their right hand free as they went through the door.

AA: Well I'll be darned.

KK: Isn't that [pause].

AA: We never used [inaudible], student speeches.

KK: Who used the [inaudible].

AA: I don't know.

KK: Have any baptisms in here that you know of?

AA: I think we did; we had some marriages in here. Student weddings.

KK: Yes, they had another record book there, I gave to the archives.

AA: They probably did have some [pause] baptism ceremonies here.

KK: [inaudible] about four, five years ago. Heavy cast iron top on the baptismal fountain there. We had no [inaudible] who did it for us, and that was honestly about four, five years ago.

AA: Good job.

KK: I thought so. Actually, we were out of various [inaudible].

AA: I don't know the story.

KK: I think I'm gonna have to get that from Jerry [Dimitman] because I can find no record of it except from the Grant B, [inaudible] stipulation that the College give a care. I keep getting different stories about the people who were buried there. Well, now [inaudible], you particularly would like to go or some question I ought to ask you?

AA: No, no. Considering everything [inaudible] oak trees are in real good shape, [inaudible] their age.

KK: Well, you know two years ago I don't think he would've said that. But for some reason or other, we hit a cycle where the trees in this area are not as bothered with the [inaudible] or two three other things.

AA: They sure look nice now.

KK: They certainly do, and a good many of them seem to be on their last legs. We had them sprayed, couple months ago. We had no rain.

AA: [inaudible] You can see that whole building right where the [inaudible], cafeteria and nice right white tile roof.

KK: You know I got lost over here with Bob Kennedy, I come out with an interview with [President Julian] McPhee and interviewed him over in the Horse Office, [inaudible] that's his office or then. That's the only place he had I guess down here.

AA: President McPhee?

KK: Yeah, and so when we got through with the interview, he suggested that Bob might like to take me over to see Voorhis. So, we started out and got lost.

AA: [inaudible] San Dimas to Covina.

KK: Yeah, go through San Dimas [inaudible], and the orange groves all look alike. We missed Valley Center and we really had [inaudible].

AA: Right here along this platform.

KK: We're walking down the esplanade now toward West Point by the way.

AA: [inaudible] Barbeque for [inaudible], it was back here when we froze the meat that year, I should say the meat didn't thaw [inaudible].

KK: You were here for the first Poly Vue?

AA: I was here for the Poly Vue in 1948. They had one in 1947.

KK: That was the first.

AA: [inaudible]

KK: They modeled it on [inaudible] I take it.

AA: Right, yes.

KK: We have one of the wildest collections of camellias that I think I've ever seen and a lot of them have just been more or less naturally hybridized. And some of these bushes, some to these plants, you'll find two or three different blooms.

AA: Where? Down the hill here?

KK: Yes, down the hill.

AA: That's, [inaudible] Jolly Batcheller's [inaudible] classes. 23 years ago, 24 years ago.

KK: One of our early vandalism problems was people coming in and digging up those plants.

AA: Mhm.

KK: Nobody is here. This is Jerry [inaudible], educational center.

AA: I'd like to own this piece of land here.

KK: That would be nice wouldn't it.

AA: [inaudible].

KK: We really [inaudible] as you know. We did some experimental planting with the Arboretum in the county and the U.S. Forestry Service right in here on experimenting with plants that could do without moisture. Uh, didn't work out very well but there's still are a few of them down there that has survived.

AA: On this side or that side?

KK: Down here, right down there.

AA: What kind of plants were they?

KK: I don't recall exactly except that they were resinous, and they had thick stems and very deep root work.

AA: Are they going to take these buildings down?

KK: I don't know.

AA: [inaudible]

KK: I think so.

AA: Lack of care. [inaudible]

KK: I hope, probably not. This microphone is not that [inaudible]. Now the [inaudible], stick it up high here, see if we can get it. We'll hope we got that on some of the tape. [Pause] You see Clifford's bomb shelter, Adam's shelter down here.

AA: Yeah. [inaudible]

KK: Our understanding is that these ten acres that was originally owned by Jerry after the school moved in and then he sold it to, eventually to a Monrovia contractor, a Covina contractor. It's now been resold and it's going to be developed to [inaudible]. It was supposed to start work on it last week according to my word. [inaudible].

AA: [inaudible]

KK: [inaudible] This first here is Clifford, Mr., and Mrs. Clifford and their two daughters and then beyond that [inaudible] and his opera star wife that he [married or buried] not too long ago.

AA: And the Voorhis family, [inaudible] understand why he would want a school for boys out here.

KK: Yeah, pardon me. Especially in the days when this was established, it would be a new world [inaudible] for the boys to collect themselves, many of them fresh start, many of them.

AA: [inaudible] Ask him about a student, 1948 to 1949 who were living off campus but actually in a [inaudible] down here in the bottom of this ravine.

KK: [laughs] I'll do that. You know—we—about eight or nine years ago we had a couple prostitutes in campers that set up business over there.

AA: [inaudible]

KK: I did [laughs]. It's part of the history.

AA: I didn't know that.

KK: Then we unearthed a [inaudible] down there that had been hidden from sheriffs. Officers who said they have been looking for him for six months.

AA: [inaudible] were they? Are we on timer?

KK: Uh no, they're not. Mr. Martinez is around here somewhere. After we get through with this tape. As a part of our history work [inaudible] archives and we feel that some of these things would be an asset to that collection. Same time, as you know, we're having a full-scale committee working on the history of the school as a whole but in addition to assisting them, my job here is to specialize in the history of the Voorhis campus itself.

AA: You're just [inaudible].

KK: Yes, it is. As I make it clear, it'll be about three years that Voorhis School for Boys or the Cal Poly San Dimas and then they educational center.

AA: Over here.

KK: Yes.

AA: [inaudible] from that librarian.

KK: I am trying to yes; she is a little bit feeble right now.

AA: That'd be good to figure out [inaudible] and bring her out here and drive her home. She has some fine memories of this library.

KK: Do you think she's able to do that?

AA: I don't know.

KK: I've had [inaudible].

AA: I was down at her home Christmas time, sitting with her, sat there for hours just talking, she was very alert, very alert. Wouldn't be able to walk very far, [inaudible].

KK: Well I'll [inaudible] on that suggestion. I didn't realize until not too long ago that a great proportion of the food [inaudible] are Hindus. They're all Latin Americans and apparently there are Hindus among them.

AA: Are they Indians?

KK: I don't know, they have a settlement around here somewhere and of course they're quite thick down around [inaudible], down in the Valley, aren't these I recall.

AA: Yeah, they are a pretty good population out there. [inaudible] basketball stars [inaudible] valley.

KK: Have any black students at that time?

AA: No, no we had no black students in my knowledge. [inaudible] Voorhis, why we were over here.

KK: Had Orientals of course, you mentioned some of those.

AA: Had a map of [inaudible] people. At that time, [inaudible].

KK: Well I want to thank you for this opportunity, sir, and I picked up many things here I want to follow through as well as have on tape and if you have some additional ideas or thoughts, I would cut at them.

AA: I'll pick up the phone and call you. I appreciate the chance to come over and just walk around. [inaudible]

KK: Second floor, administration building.

AA: [inaudible] and [inaudible] headquarters up there, George [inaudible] office, Econ Office, and George Karlberg, they were up there, and that room adjoining, the gymnasium operations upstairs [inaudible] the winding stairway there.

KK: [laughs] That was Jerry's secret hideaway. That was a hidden stairway.

AA: He'd go up there and—

KK: Try to get on and read and think and get away from the early [inaudible] of it all.

AA: [inaudible] Our early days here were so quiet compared to our quiet days now, it's amazing.

KK: You turn three whole chapters of history right there with that one statement.

AA: Moments in late 40s, early 50s were calm compared to our most quiet days today.

KK: I think your biggest problems were down here as you recall them now.

AA: Lack of [inaudible], lack of breadth of offerings in general education, [inaudible]. I think that the college was giving the student the academic opportunity they deserved, I say that in recognizing that you can't do everything at one time. We offered no [inaudible] literature courses. The music offerings were so extremely limited [inaudible] and yet take a look at what [inaudible] did over the two and a half decades. What we have now is a Music major as it springboards right in [inaudible] first weeks amongst here. We offered nowhere near enough coursework in American History, Government, Psychology, Sociology.

We compare our students today with students at that time, I think basically in terms of requirements for [inaudible]. I admit that our students today are, intellectually speaking, on the average much more [inaudible]. And I would think that anything we offer today [inaudible] with all our [inaudible] academic majors, our thrust in the graduate programs, our thrust in our effort to gain university status, would be above the heads of those people who were here as students in the late 40s. I think that's the [inaudible] when they see fit to pursue an education when they are ready to sit down and give up the days of pleasures for tomorrow's security, they will succeed.

KK: Well, there's a lot of philosophy there and you can see that philosophy reflected in your Deanship.

AA: I personally feel not enough of [inaudible] effective there, but that's not the point in question now.

KK: Thank you again sir.

AA: Ok, thank you, appreciate it.

End of Albert Aschenbrenner Interview Part 2 of

Index

	<u>Page Number</u>
Arboretum	17
Adams, Bob	2
Batcheller, Oliver A. “Jolly”	5, 8, 11, 16
Beckett, Helen	3-4
Bogner, Bob	9
Excelsior High School	10
House, Henry	2-4, 6, 9, 13
Hawkins, Howard	9
Miller, Jim	2
Orange Coast College	10
Poly Vue	3, 16
Vet Hill	3, 8, 10
Wilson, Harold	1-2, 9
Winterbourne, Robert “Bob”	2, 9